

**Testimony**  
**Human Services Committee**  
**February 14, 2023**  
**In support of HB 6616**  
**An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits**  
**To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status**

**Joelle Fishman, Chair, Connecticut Communist Party USA**

Co-Chairs Rep Gilcrest and Sen Lesser, and members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Joelle Fishman, I live in New Haven, and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Communist Party in favor of HB 6616 An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status – the bill known as “Husky for Immigrants.”

It is appropriate that this hearing takes place on Valentine's Day because it is past due time to show love to our sisters and brothers in the immigrant community by expanding HUSKY to all those under 26 who would otherwise qualify regardless of immigration status.

I had the opportunity to hear some of the young people from Husky for Immigrants tell their heart wrenching stories of having to go without proper medical attention when needed. Their message is straightforward. What affects one community affects all communities.

The COVID – 19 pandemic revealed the need to strengthen our health care system overall, and also exposed long term inequalities of race and economics in health care and all areas of life.

The exclusion of immigrant communities from availability to health care is a matter of life and death for those left out, but also for the entire community. HB 6616 takes a big step forward by expanding HUSKY. But there is still much to be done to include parents and adults of all ages in health care programs regardless of immigration status.

It has become common to say that healthcare is a human right, but the challenge is to make that a reality.

In 2021 it was estimated that immigrant workers paid \$1.8 billion in state and local taxes to CT, of which \$145 million were paid by immigrants without documents. It is unjust that while these taxes contribute to funding the Husky program, immigrants have been excluded from coverage.

HB 6616 takes necessary steps to fix this injustice and provide dignity and economic well being to immigrant families. We urge you to show Connecticut love to the immigrant community today and support HB 6616. And urgently consider taking necessary action to include the entire immigrant community in health care programs, regardless of status. It will make our state a stronger and healthier place for everyone.